

CATS Newsletter

Vol. 11 No. 5
September 19

The Capital Area
Timex/Sinclair Users Group



CHAIR RUMBLINGS

by George Rey

On the matter of the CATS Constitution, as printed in the August 2nd Newsletter - be advised that Article Four; Section Two; that the word "President" means "Chair". As Chair for August I advise that my duty extends until the beginning of the September meeting.

During the August meeting three volunteered for the Monthly duties to keep CATS afloat. Bob Diggs gets to be the "Rey" for September, I accepted to be his Recording Secretary, and Mannie Quintero accepted to be his Vice-Chair. This looks like a precedent for the future - rotating duties in a sequential rotating manner. It means acceptance of the Chair also accepts to be Recording Secretary the month after, and Vice-Chair a month after that. Restructuring can get rid off a lot of Democratic (Liberal?) cholesterol?

Not to be outdone, Hank Dickson also volunteered to be editor for the September Newsletter while the Editor, Mark Fisher, galligoggels at the Hulas on Waikiki Beach. Aloha - Mark, lets us know by PC (Personal Communicator) how long the skirts are - so will go Stocks (not Socks).

Please note that the Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer, and Editor are exempt from serving as Monthly officers. I apologize to Cliff Watson for accepting Bob Diggs for the September Chair - but Cliff there is October. Besides he bribed me with an offer to hold our annual picnic at his Hacienda.

Speaking of the Treasurer, Barry Washington reported that CATS financial accounts are as sound as the Dollar was before Nixon closed the "Gold Window" at the Treasury. Maybe Barry could teach Bentsen on how to keep the Capital and the Capitol afloat.

Please note - our annual Fiesta and next meeting notices in this issue.

On reflection I see sparks of greater interest in our potential to learn from each other. Moreover I have never attended a meeting where so many members have volunteered for so many duties so willingly. This is encouraging and with new technology expanding our horizons and capabilities to do more with what we have and can modestly expand. I project a very good year ahead.

I wish to thank Tom Robbins for his workshop presentation on the XCHANGE program. Its a winner, but I can't get my machine from crashing when using it. I do appreciate the copies he made for all of us and the copy Ruth Fegley mailed me. I see this all as normal as getting the "bugs" out is part of using technology for productive uses.

And Editor's Grumblings...

Mark Fisher

Well, the rumors of my departure have been greatly exaggerated, it seems. Rather than disappearing in a flurry of intercontinental travel, I waited by a quiet bay for word that arrangements had been completed. They never were, and here I am back again. I still MIGHT end up on a jet plane, but...

If you think that's inconclusive, you should feel what it's like on my end. Since I'm back, I've put this shorter edition of the newsletter together for distribution at the meeting.

What will get in the newsletter:

All material submitted to the newsletter will be printed. Period. If no one sends anything in, the newsletter will be VERY short. Material may be submitted via BBS (301-589-7407), IBM disk, QL disk, or hard copy (hard copy will not be re-typed).

Megabytes & Megabucks

by George Rey

This starts a new column on Electronic Economics, Econ 999.

Like "Gigolo and Giggalet" in their "Boulevard of Broken Dreams", a 40's Tony Bennett sung "Dance Macabre", Megabytes and Megabucks (M&M) dance in the ether, not the streets, for Money. Every day some three trillion bucks whiz at near light speed in bytes moves across the globe like boll weevils - "Just a-looking for a home". These transactions pass through Nation-State's air spaces, like missiles and bypass their defenses, money and financial Rules of "Roberto", or whomever, including our, or any other, Fed.

This money (?) moves by telecom megabytes and has been dubbed "Megabyte Money". Most economists still don't know how, or why it all happened. Some put not the "Blame on Mame", but on Nixon when he nixed the convertability of dollars into money (gold) by closing the Treasury's "Gold Window". For that matter they don't know what money, or inflation, is either, anymore, nor did they ever. But there are "Money Masters" (MM's) that know what money is, where it is, what its worth, and where it's going. It's their stew and they know how to cook it. They dictate the creation of the money supply internationally, irrespective of the now outdated Nation-States (poor Isabel) like us, Britain, etc.

Last fall George Soros, a MM, played Russian-Roulette with the Bank of Britain on the value of the Pound, and with a single spin of the wheel walked off the floor with near a billion bucks with the English populace left to pay the bill. If you don't believe me read "The Death of Money" by Joel Krutzman who claims electronic mail is now electronic money. These events are occurring in the new M&M economies of the world by actions of the MM's. While the Greenspans have titles the George's have the money (gold?). Like Nathan Rothchild "they care not what puppets rule the populace, they rule the money supply". All this is occurring by the combined use of info crunching and transfers with PC's (Personal Computers and Communicators) jointly, flashing bets in the largest "Taj Mahal" (Not Trump's, he is broke) casino the world has ever known. This casino is not stocked with dealers but with mathematicians, software developers, and short term MM speculators who befuddle brokers, economists and induce volatility in all markets.

Is all this good or bad? I don't know - yet, but it is of megabyte capacity and PC driven through financial "money internets" over the globe. One virus could make it rain, but not "Pennies from Heaven", rather colored paper like you use to play Monopoly. Some like Davidson and Rees-Mogg, the "Blood in the Streets" duet, now suggest that "Boulevards of Broken Dreams" are upon us in their scare "The Great Reckoning".

The M&M "Nintendo" game moves more money around than the combined GNP's of all Nations per year by orders of magnitude. True wealth increases of products and services will not grow if too many play the game. As for a winner, like George, "not born with a silver spoon in his mouth", he does place some of his winnings into humanistic endowments using golden spoons.

Is the Nation-State being made obsolete by the M&M state ruled by the MMs? Does the Nation-State need to restructure like CATS?

Next time - Donovan Revisited.

THE FUTURE LIES BEHIND!

Using a computer to create a 17th. Century backstaff.
by Clark Fisher

Well, I'm sorry, this isn't a description of CAD-CAM from an orphan computer. There are no whirring NC milling machines, no megabyte files, no color shaded 3-D images dancing on giant VDT's. Just the creak of rigging, the gentle sighing of the wind, and the crisp click of the keyboard.

The seventeenth century was a period of intense expansion in trans-Atlantic trade. One of the factors in this was the development of improved navigational techniques. While the conduct of ships was a conservative enterprise, with mariners learning primarily from tradition, there was a significant growth in techniques over the sixteenth century.

One of the primary areas of growth was the determination of longitude (or position north-south on the globe). From the time of the Portuguese exploration of Africa, there had been two methods of finding longitude - the mariner's astrolabe, and the crossstaff. Each used the sun's height at noon to deduce the longitude, after allowing for the sun's position movement in the sky through the seasons.

Each had its own strengths and significant weaknesses. The astrolabe could return a value

without reference to a horizon - this allowed its use in harbors or under thin fog; but it was sensitive to the boat's motion, required at least two people to operate it, and was inherently less accurate. The Crosstaff was potentially more accurate, but it required the operator to face the sun for several minutes at a time and pay attention to two different images separated by as much as 90 degrees. In addition, it required a good horizon for comparison. In practice, the astrolabe was used near the equator, where the sun at noon is overhead, and the crosstaff was used in northern voyages, where the sun was never far from the horizon.

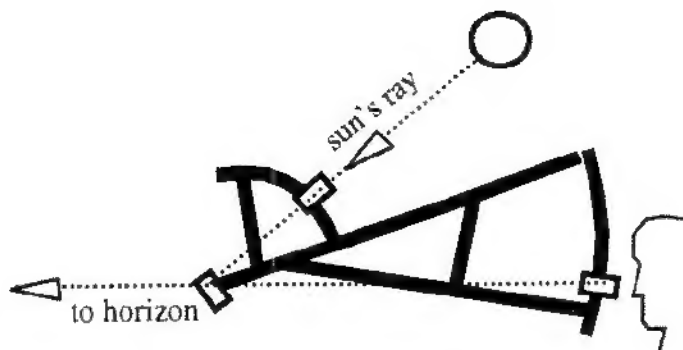
John Davis was a master mariner who made several of the epochal voyages of the late Fifteenth century (the Davis Straight, etc). As much of his navigation was in the far north, he was very aware of the defects of the crosstaff. His solution, publicised in a 1597 book, was the Davis Backstaff. Rather than have the user face the sun for long minutes, the backstaff allowed the navigator to look away from the sun, and compare a shadow cast by it with the horizon. It could also provide a high quality reading on the sun's altitude when the sun was high in the sky. This idea was adopted quickly, and was in common use into the late 1800's. (The sextant had been invented by then, but the backstaff was cheaper.)

I came across a set of plans for a backstaff, and decided to make one. The frame of the instrument was made of mahogany and holly. Fitting it together was an enjoyable exercise in cabinet work, as each joint was mortise and tenon, and each was at yet another strange angle.

But when I finished the frame, I realized I would have to calibrate the thing. I carefully measured the radius of the two arcs, and set up a short BASIC program to give the measurements of successive increments along each. By measuring each major increment separately, I hoped to avoid cumulative errors along the arcs. The computer gave me measurements to eight decimal places. As I tried to reproduce them on the wood, it became aparent that I was only going to be able to mark it to three decimal places - the same accuracy as a slide rule.

The results? A fine looking instrument. As the engraving of the arcs was done by hand, it doesn't have the clockwork precision of the originals I've seen - but in practice, it produced readings within 30 miles of a modern sextant - close enough to cross the Atlantic with!

MTF

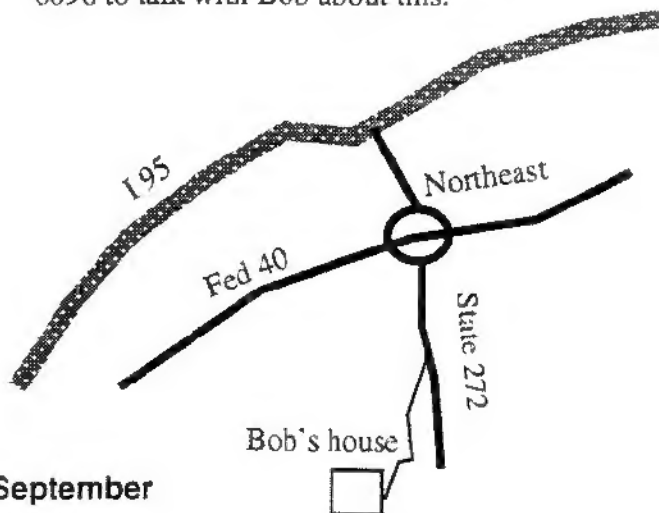


The Davis Backstaff



PARTY HEARTY AT BOB DIGGS!

The annual CATS picnic will be held on September 25, at Bob Diggs' place on the Northeast River. Take I95 north from Baltimore, turn off at state #272 to the town of Northeast. Go through town and turn right at the liquor store, then on to Bob's house. Phone (410) 287-6098 to talk with Bob about this.



CATS Newsletter
P.O. Box 11017
Takoma Park, MD 20913

FIRST CLASS MAIL



The next meeting of CATS will be held on: September 11, 1993
12:00 M Hardware workshop
2:00 PM General meeting

At: New Carrollton Public Library

If you are not a member of CATS, this is the only issue you will receive.

Monthly meetings are held from 12:00 M to 4:30 PM on the second Saturday of each month at the New Carrollton Library.

Meetings

- President Monthly position
- Vice-President Monthly position
- Recording Secretary Monthly position
- Corresponding Secretary Joe Miller
- Treasurer Barry Washington
- Newsletter Editor Mark Fisher
- (301) 589-7407
- (301) 588-0579 BBS

Officers:

THE CAPITAL AREA TIMEX/SINCLAIR USERS GROUP is a not-for-profit group serving the interests of those who own, use, or are interested in the Timex/Sinclair family of computers.

Newsletter

User Group memberships cost \$15.00 per year, are good for 12 months and include all privileges (access to software libraries, group buys, etc.). A newsletter-only subscription is available for persons living outside the Washington metropolitan area and is \$12.00 per year.

Networks

Timex SIG on CompuServe: Wednesday night 10:00 PM Eastern Standard Time (GO CLUB)

CATS BBS: (301) 588-0579, 8-N-1, 300/1200 baud. Message base and files for members, 24 hours a day, no time limits.

CATS' CONSTITUTION

Amended 05/04/91 (non-member n/l subscriptions)
Amendment 07/10/93 (streamlining)

ARTICLE ONE: Name of organization

This constitution creates an organization to be known as the Capital Area Timex/Sinclair Users Group (CATS.) CATS shall be a voluntary, not for profit organization.

ARTICLE TWO: Purpose

Section One: General

The purpose of CATS shall be to create and maintain a spirit of helpfulness among owners and users of the Timex/Sinclair (T/S) family of computers, and to educate the membership in the uses and applications of these computers.

Section Two: Newsletter

CATS shall publish a newsletter monthly, or otherwise as the Users Group shall direct, to record the activities of CATS, to announce events of interest to the membership, and to exchange ideas concerning T/S computer matters.

Section Three: Miscellaneous

CATS shall serve as a clearinghouse for information on the T/S family of computers. It shall act as a group to make discount purchases. CATS does not assume any obligation to intervene on behalf of any member or other person in connection with any legal proceeding.

ARTICLE THREE: Meetings

Section One: General

Meetings shall be held on the second Saturday of each month or as the Users Group may direct. Organizational business may be transacted at any meeting at which a quorum (see Article Three Section Four) is present. The meetings may be conducted informally unless Robert's Rules of Order Revised is invoked by a majority of those present.

Section Two: Annual

A meeting shall be held each year in conjunction with the June general meeting for the purpose of electing officers.

Section Three: Quorum

A quorum for the general and the annual meetings shall consist of five members IN ATTENDANCE OF WHICH AT LEAST ONE MUST BE AN ELECTED OFFICIAL OF CATS.

ARTICLE FOUR: Officers and the newsletter editor

Section One: Officers

The officers of CATS shall consist of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, a Recording Secretary, a Corresponding Secretary, and a Treasurer. All officers shall be members of CATS and shall serve without compensation.

Section Two: Newsletter editor

A newsletter editor who shall be a member of CATS, shall be appointed by the Chairman and approved by a majority at a general meeting.

ARTICLE FIVE: Duties of officers

Section One: Chairperson

The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings described in Article Three, shall appoint and abolish temporary committees.

The Chairperson shall appoint a replacement for any officer of the Users Group.

Section Two: Vice-Chairperson

The Vice Chairperson shall preside at meetings in the absence of the Chairperson.

Section Three: Recording Secretary

The Recording Secretary shall keep a written record of all meetings described in Article Three.

Section Four: Treasurer

The Treasurer shall receive and disburse all monies belonging to CATS and shall represent CATS to the general public. No extraordinary expenditure shall be made by the Treasurer without the approval of the Users Group (see Article Eight Section One.) The Treasurer shall keep an accurate record of general

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organization accounts and shall report on the state of the finance of CATS at the general meetings. On the expiration of the term of office of the Treasurer all monies, accounts, records, and receipts shall be turned over to the incoming Treasurer.

Section Five: Corresponding Secretary

The Corresponding Secretary shall be responsible for receiving mail directed to CATS. The Corresponding Secretary shall be responsible either for answering the mail, if it is general in nature, or for routing to an appropriate member for a response and/or action. The corresponding secretary shall be responsible for reviewing significant transactions with the membership, either through the newsletter or at general meetings.

ARTICLE SIX: Election of officers

Section One: Term of Office

The Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Recording Secretary shall be pro-tem positions, and shall serve for one month. The term of office for all other officers of the Users Group shall be one year. All terms shall COMMENCE AT THE CLOSE OF THE MEETING at which they were chosen.

Section Two: Nominations

Nominations for the pro-tem positions will be generated each month. Nominations for the yearly positions shall be made at the June general meeting.

Section Three: Elections

The presiding Chairperson shall conduct the election.

ARTICLE SEVEN: Membership, dues, and newsletter subscriptions

Section One: Membership

A Membership in CATS shall last for twelve months and shall include a newsletter subscription. A membership may include an entire family, but it entitles the family to only one vote.

Section Two: Dues

Dues shall be determined by a majority vote of the membership at a general meeting.

Section Three: Non-Member newsletter subscription

A Non-Member newsletter subscription shall be available for a twelve month period. Its rate shall be determined by the Users Group.

ARTICLE EIGHT: Finances

Section One: Obligations

Authority for the payment of bills shall be made by the Users Group at general meetings.

Section Two: Authorized signatures

CATS' checks shall be signed only by the Treasurer or Corresponding Secretary.

Section Three: Audit

An audit of all CATS' financial records shall be conducted immediately following the closing of the Treasurer's term of office and shall be resented to the membership at the next general meeting. The Audit shall be conducted by two members of CATS. They shall be appointed by the Chairperson.

Section Four: Projects

Official projects shall be approved by the Users Group. Monies from all official projects of CATS shall be routed through the Treasurer. No property of CATS shall be disposed of without a majority vote of the membership at a general meeting.

ARTICLE NINE: Standards of conduct

It is the policy of CATS that software piracy and theft of intellectual property are incompatible with its goals.

ARTICLE TEN: Amendments

This constitution may be amended by raising the issue from the floor at any general meeting. The proposal shall be printed in the newsletter and presented at the next general meeting. A two thirds (2/3) vote of the membership present shall be required to approve the proposed amendment. The final version shall be printed in the next newsletter.